

May 8, 2022

Happy Mother's Day,

To all the mothers and grandmothers of our community, as well as to all the maternal hearts and hands that respond with love and compassion to the needs of others—happy Mother's Day. You are desperately needed in these evolutionary times. Our children and our own, usually unrecognized, child-like minds and hearts are in constant need of nurturing. The world expects so much of us! And most of us are ill-equipped to successfully handle all the demands and expectations roughly placed on our shoulders without, at least, some amount of consideration and care. The pandemic has made this all-too clear. Where would we be without the generous yet beleaguered care of nurses and doctors, of farmers, harvesters, delivery persons, teachers and aid workers who have given their time, and their last drop of energy, to insure some level of concern, support, and consolation through these past devastating years? We have needed—and still need—mothering. Too often, I think, we forget this fact as adults, believing erroneously that we can completely take care of ourselves, believing we 'should' be able to do so, and that we are failing if we cannot. Yet we need food to live, air to breathe, water to stay alive, and both love and connections with others to be and remain healthy. Even if we grow our own food, we need the sun and rain in proper measure for those plants to grow. We are dependent on Mother Earth for our basic existence. We are all children of Earth. While the value of 'nurture' has been largely seen as a childhood need, all of us must have care and attention from others at times throughout our lives just to survive. Think about the last time your power went out in the dead of winter, or any time you or someone in your family had a health crisis.

The modern world pretends that only children need mothering, that 'nurture' is no longer needed when children reach adulthood, and that adults are, or should be, self-sufficient. Being able to take care of ourselves is, of course, an important developmental goal; it is certainly the goal of good parenting. But believing that once we reach adulthood society itself has no responsibility to offer care, compassion, and support means that we've jettisoned 'the mother principle' from the life of the culture, if not the life of the world. The need for gentleness and sensitivity at all levels of society couldn't be much greater than it is today. Anxiety, world-wide, is higher than it has been since mental health statistics began to be collected.

We need a return of the Divine Mother. We need a systemic change based on what every mother knows—embodiment is precious. I have a political cartoon produced during the Vietnam War that I've kept all these years. It is of a mother whose arms are wrapped around two frightened children. Her face looks sad, yet determined, and the caption reads: "Seeds for the planting shall not be ground up!" Precious bodies, precious lives, birthed with love and swaddled in tenderness, are the seeds of a healthy planetary future. The attitude that bodies are dispensable, can be fodder for a war machine or be used, even maimed, in the interest of corporate profit is antithetical to Christianity. The bodies of animals, birds, fish, rivers, oceans, trees and forests—all of the natural world—are likewise precious gifts of the Creator, gifts of Mother Earth. They, too, are sacred.

We live in a Sanctuary. The physicality of our earthly experience is blessed as the Creation story in Genesis reminded us at the Easter Vigil—all the natural world is "good, and very good." Our life-giving, nurturing, receptive and tender Divine Mother urges us to recognize, respect, and protect that which gives and sustains the bodies, minds and hearts of her glorious creation. Honoring the wisdom and divine agency of mothers is, perhaps, where we must begin.

Readings for Liturgies can be found on the USCCB website at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/>.

Upcoming Events:

Online Mass Schedule Continues This Month

Mass via Zoom will be Saturday, **May 14**, at **5:00pm**. Our Masses are online every 2nd Saturday-of-the-month.

Zoom Invitations for May Liturgy

If you have regularly participated in Sophia Christi liturgies, or have recently requested a Zoom invitation to our online Masses, you will automatically receive a Zoom invitation this month. Invitations will be sent Friday, May 13. If you have not been involved in the past but would like to participate in the online liturgies, let Toni know by responding to this email no later than Wednesday, May 11.

Pastoral Update

Celebrate Sophia Christi's 15th Anniversary—Call for Submissions

On August 13th Sophia Christi celebrates 15 years as a parish. To mark this milestone we are compiling a collection of commemorative photos and writings that tell the story of Sophia Christi over the years, but we need your help. We invite you to share your thoughts and stories about Sophia Christi by submitting a brief paragraph for inclusion in our commemorative compilation. The deadline for submissions is June 15th. More information coming soon, but if you have questions please contact Josie at Josephine.miranda64@oregonstate.edu.

Join us for our May Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together—May 28

Hello, everyone! This month's Sophia Christi Zoom Get Together is Saturday, May 28th, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. All are welcome. For more information, please contact Josie at Josephine.miranda64@gmail.com. See you on the 28th!--Josie Miranda

Staying Connected – Zoom Gatherings and Facebook Options

In addition to our monthly Masses and social gatherings over Zoom, we also have the Sophia Christi Facebook page. You can join the page and check for postings about online courses and other offerings, as well as post information you would like to share. FB also provides the option of hosting a private group discussion in one of its meet-up rooms. If anyone would like more information about this resource, or if you are interested in facilitating a discussion with other Sophia Christi members please contact Anna Lankutis lankutisa@gmail.com, or Rachel Wheeler rastonwinchel@hotmail.com.

Care Team

If you are interested in being a part of the Care Team or you have a need that the Care Team might respond to, please contact Kathleen Glover gloverconnection@yahoos.com or Pastor Toni.

Member's Corner – Sharing Reflections

This space in the newsletter is available for sharing our stories, insights and experiences. Consider sending a short paragraph of your own for inclusion in next month's edition. Deadline is March 28 for the April newsletter.

Website

Outreach has always been part of the mission of Sophia Christi and our website is an important aspect of that mission. The web address is www.sophiachristi.org

A continuing pastoral invitation—In the normal course of life I have the opportunity to meet with you personally when a pastoral issue arises, or you want/need spiritual support. But we are somewhere outside the range of 'normal' now. Please let me know if I can assist you in this strange time we are living through. I am still available by phone (503-286-3584) and you can still reach me through this email address. Feel free to use either one.

As the Easter season unfolds toward Pentecost we look in on the early Church and read stories from the Acts of the Apostles. As the disciples and their followers begin sharing memories of his life, his teachings, and the instructions he's given them for continuing his ministry, they are forced to wrestle with their ancestral beliefs. How did the Law of Moses (with its many regulations around foods that could and could not be eaten, as well as the requirement of circumcision) shape up against Jesus' concise summary of that law? "A new commandment I give you," he had said: "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. This sums up the Law and the Prophets."

New beginnings summon creativity, and the first few centuries C.E. were a creative time for the early church. Old beliefs clashed with new awareness, raised uncomfortable questions, and initiated tremendous change. It became increasingly clear that the old ways no longer fit the new circumstances. Gentiles were hearing of Jesus from people like Paul. Even Peter was slowly coming to realize that Jesus' message was meant for everyone, not just Jews. The disciples were scrambling to make sense of recent events. New questions were being asked and fresh ideas began forming. Various writings were circulating as people gathered in the homes of friends and family to share stories, remember Jesus, and break bread. Different regions read different writings, did things differently, implemented changes that made sense locally. Conflicts arose between disciples and within house churches about how far to go with changes, what should be retained of the old ways and what needed to be left behind.

We are in a similar time as our understanding of human nature evolves alongside our increasing connections with each other and the universe thanks to technological advances. The difference is that now we aren't 'protected' by geographical distances. Chaos and war halfway across the globe affects us all. We have entered a new age of minute-by-minute connectivity while social, cultural, political, and religious systems both change and resist change. We are personally and socially exhausted by the insistently rapid pace of all the moving parts. At the same time, we are spiritually primed for the 'new heaven and new earth' spoken of in Revelation next weekend. We are perched on the precipice of cosmic awareness while, at the same time, our bodies, minds and hearts suffer the demise of a 'norm' centuries old that we came to believe was 'reality.' Geographically we were more separate then. We heard little about what was happening in other parts of the world. Yet here we are, in an age of accelerated growth, which means we are collectively outgrowing our 'old clothes.' Old beliefs are dying. Old ways of operating are fiercely clinging to life precisely because they are dying. It's painful to watch and, since we are all connected, our nervous systems feel all of it...strongly. The final words from Revelation next weekend can reassure us if we allow ourselves to trust our Divine Mother: "See, I make all things new." Inspire us, Holy Mother, with faith, hope and receptivity of your lovingly new creation.

May this Easter season nurture us all and bring us peace,

Toni